



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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TO: ARA - Ambassador Todman
THROUGH: ARA - Ambassador Stedman
FROM: ARA/ECA - Robert W. Zimmermann *See memo here*
SUBJECT: Your Meeting with the American Jewish Committee - Thursday, September 1 - 5:00 pm.

Four representatives of the American Jewish Committee will meet with you Thursday, September 1 at 5:00 pm. Those attending will be Richard Maas, President of the AJC, Bertram Gold, Executive Vice President, David Geller, Director of Latin American Affairs, and Jacobo Kovadloff, who ran the AJC office in Buenos Aires.

The discussion will center around Geller's recent trip to Argentina and the growing concern of the Argentine Jewish community that anti-Semitism is increasing within the GOA. Geller told us that the AJC is especially distressed by the Reznizky kidnapping (the son of leader of the Argentine Jewish community was kidnapped and only released after his father had interceded with President Videla) and the Timerman case (Timerman told Congressman Gilman that he had been questioned about an international Jewish conspiracy). Notwithstanding GOA assurances that religious persecution will not be tolerated, the AJC is worried.

I have attached a cable on the Gilman-Timerman conversation to illustrate why this AJC nervousness may be well justified.

Jim Bumpus and I would like to sit in on the meeting if you have no objections.

Attachment: As stated.

Drafted: ARA/ECA: JNBumpus:jc

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SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 6326

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2, AND 4

TAGS: SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: INTERIOR MINISTER SEES JACOBO TIMERMAN;
CONGRESSMAN GILMAN ALSO PERMITTED INTERVIEW WITH TIMERMAN

REF: BUENOS AIRES 6173; BUENOS AIRES 6137

1. SUMMARY. CONGRESSMAN GILMAN'S RECENT MEETING WITH TIMERMAN IS SUMMARIZED BELOW. THERE IS ALSO CONTAINED A SUMMARY OF AN ALLEGED CONFESSION MADE BY TIMERMAN DURING HIS CAPTIVITY. UNDER GROUND RULES ESTABLISHED BY THE GOA, MR. GILMAN AGREED NOT TO GIVE ANY PUBLICITY TO HIS MEETING. THE DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS MESSAGE WOULD PLACE TIMERMAN IN IMMEDIATE JEOPARDY AND COULD ALSO ADVERSELY AFFECT US-ARGENTINE RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING THE VISIT OF CODEL YATRON TO BUENOS AIRES, AUGUST 17-20, REPRESENTATIVE BENJAMIN GILMAN ASKED FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS FOR PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW JACOBO TIMERMAN, THE PUBLISHER OF "LA OPINION" UNTIL HIS ARREST LAST APRIL IN CONNECTION WITH THE GRAIVER INVESTIGATION. UNTIL NOW, THE ONLY INDIVIDUALS ALLOWED TO VISIT TIMERMAN HAVE BEEN CLOSE FAMILY MEMBERS AND HIS RABBI (WHO IS A UNITED STATES CITIZEN). WITHIN 24 HOURS OF MR. GILMAN'S REQUEST, THE FOREIGN MINISTER OBTAINED A GOVERNMENT DECISION TO PERMIT A CONFIDENTIAL INTERVIEW WHICH TOOK PLACE IN THE EVENING OF AUGUST 19 IN GOVERNMENT HOUSE. MR. GILMAN INTERVIEWED TIMERMAN IN THE PRESENCE OF A FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL AND AN EMBOFF. AS A PRECONDITION FOR THE INTERVIEW, MR. GILMAN AGREED TO GROUND RULES LAID DOWN BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT HE WOULD NOT PUBLICIZE THE MEETING OR THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CONVERSATION. ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS, HOWEVER, THE CONGRESSMAN WAS AUTHORIZED TO INFORM HIS COLLEAGUES, WHICH LATER WAS DEFINED TO INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCE BELIEVED THAT PRESIDENT VIDELA WAS AWARE OF THE DECISION TO PERMIT THE INTERVIEW, BUT IT WAS BEING HELD CLOSELY WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT.

3. TIMERMAN WALKED UNHANDCUFFED AND ALONE INTO A ROOM WHERE HIS VISITORS WERE WAITING. HE CONVERSED WITH THE CONGRESSMAN IN ENGLISH. HE WAS DRESSED IN CASUAL STREET CLOTHES AND AN OLD SPORT JACKET WHICH APPEARED TO BE HIS OWN. HIS MANNER WAS SADDLED, BUT HE APPEARED TO BE REMARKABLY IN CONTROL OF HIS MENTAL FACULTIES. IN FACT, HE DEMONSTRATED CONSIDERABLE ACUITY AND WIT AND HIS CONVERSATION WAS LACED WITH BITTERSWEET TONGUE AT TIMES. EXCEPT FOR A DISCOLORED (BLACK) SKIN AREA UNDER ONE FINGERNAIL, THERE WAS NO OUTWARD SIGN OF BRUISES.

4. MR. GILMAN ASKED HOW HE WAS BEING TREATED AND HOW HE WAS FEELING. TIMERMAN REPLIED THAT A PRISONER IN HIS CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD NOT ANSWER THAT KIND OF A QUESTION, BUT HE WAS ALLRIGHT NOW -- WITH EMPHASIS ON THE "NOW". HE APPEARED TO BE SUBSTANTIALLY UNDERWEIGHT, BUT IT IS

POSSIBLE THAT HE HAS BEEN GRAINING AGAIN IN RECENT WEEKS AS A RESULT OF IMPROVED TREATMENT.

5. TIMERMAN SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHY HE WAS BEING HELD, AS NO FORMAL CHARGES HAD BEEN LODGED AGAINST HIM. HE HAD NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO SEE THE MILITARY JUDGE'S INVESTIGATING REPORT, WHICH WAS SECRET. FROM THE NATURE OF THE QUESTIONS ASKED OF HIM, HOWEVER, THE MILITARY OFFICIAL'S HANDLING OF THE INVESTIGATION WAS NO SOURCE OF COMFORT FOR HIM. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL, ADMITTING THAT HE TOO HAD NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO SEE THE PRELIMINARY JUDICIAL REPORT, STATED THAT ACCORDING TO COMMON KNOWLEDGE MR. TIMERMAN WAS SUSPECTED OF "ECONOMIC SUBVERSION" IN CONNECTION WITH THE GRAIVER AFFAIR. THE OFFICIAL DOUBTED THAT TIMERMAN COULD BE GRANTED THE RIGHT OF OPTIMUM OF SELF-EXILE ABROAD AS HIS CASE WAS NOW IN THE JUDICIAL PROCESS. TIMERMAN SAID HIS INTERROGATORS NEVER ONCE ASKED HIM ABOUT GRAIVER. INSTEAD, THE BULK OF THE QUESTIONS HAD TO DO WITH A PRESUMED WORLD JEWISH CONSPIRACY AGAINST ARGENTINA. HE WAS TOLD THAT SOVIET PREMIER KOSIGHIN WAS A JEW. HIS INTERROGATORS ASKED WHAT HE KNEW ABOUT

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SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 0330

SECRET MEETINGS BETWEEN ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER BEGUIN AND THE
MONTEROS AND A SECRET PLAN OF "THE ELDERS OF ZION" (IN THE LAST
CENTURY) TO TAKE OVER PATAGONIA ("PLAN ANDINA"). AT ONE TIME MAN
SAID HE ALMOST GIVE IN TO TEMPTATION TO PLAY ALONG WITH THE
ANTISEMITIC PARANOIA OF HIS CAPTORS AND INVENT A STORY ABOUT
SECRET MEETINGS OF THE "ELDERS OF ZION" IN ARGENTINA. HE ALSO
MENTIONED THAT HE HAD ASKED HIS JAILER, A SIMPLE, MAN, WHICH WAS
THE EAST WALL OF HIS TINY PRISON CELL SO THAT HE COULD SAY HIS
DAILY PRAYERS, BUT THIS INFORMATION LUDICROUSLY WAS DENIED ON
SECURITY GROUNDS.

6. TIMERMAN WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO EXPLAIN TO THE CONGRESSMAN
THE GOVERNMENT'S NEED TO TAKE EXTRAORDINARY ACTION AGAINST
TERRORIST SUBVERSION AND ASKED FOR THE CONGRESSMAN'S UNDER-
STANDING OF THE SUBVERSIVE THREAT FACING THE MILITARY
GOVERNMENT WHEN IT TOOK POWER. TIMERMAN SAID HE WAS A STRONG
SUPPORTER OF THE VIDELA ADMINISTRATION AND HOPED THAT THE
U.S. WOULD DO EVERYTHING IT COULD TO SUPPORT VIDELA. HE
COMPLAINED THAT THE U.S. CONGRESS AT TIMES NAIVELY HAD
APPROACHED THE ARGENTINE QUESTION AND RECALLED THAT HE HAD
OFFERED LATE LAST YEAR TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE FRASER
SUBCOMMITTEE ABOUT THE TERRORIST CONNECTIONS OF GUSTAVO ROCA
AND CARLOS NACIO, WHOSE TESTIMONY FRASER HAD TAKEN EARLIER.
HEARING HIS VOICE SOUDLY, "LOOK WHAT HAPPENS TO A MAN WHO WAS
TRYING TO DEFEND THE GOVERNMENT," HE SAID.

7. TIMERMAN WAS VERY GRATEFUL FOR MR. GILMAN'S EFFORT TO SEE
HIM AND ALSO FOR MR. GILMAN'S INTEREST IN HIS WELFARE. GILMAN
EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT JUSTICE WOULD BE DONE IN THE TIMERMAN
CASE, IMPRESSING UPON THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL THAT
TIMERMAN'S CAPTIVITY HAD EARNED ARGENTINA ENORMOUS NEGATIVE
PUBLICITY PERIOD. TIMERMAN WAS THEN ESCORTED WITHOUT HANDCUFFS
TO A JEEP WAITING OUTSIDE AND DRIVEN AWAY.

8. COMMENT: WHILE IT IS POSSIBLE THAT TIMERMAN MAY HAVE BEEN
GIVEN SOME COACHING BEFORE THE MEETING, THIS IS NOT NECESSARILY
THE CASE. TIMERMAN DID NOT SAY ANYTHING WITH RESPECT TO
U.S. POLICY AND THE NEED TO SUPPORT THE MODERATE VIDELA FORCES
THAT HE HAD NOT SAID BEFORE PUBLICLY IN HIS OWN NEWSPAPER WHEN
HE WAS A FREE MAN. GOVERNMENT'S MOTIVE IN ARRANGING THE
INTERVIEW APPARENTLY WAS TO APPEAR TO BE RESPONSIVE TO A
PRESUMABLY FRIENDLY U.S. CONGRESSMAN WHO OPPOSED SANCTIONS
AGAINST ARGENTINA AND WHO PRESUMABLY WAS INFLUENTIAL IN
AMERICAN AERIAL CIRCLES. ARGENTINA HAS INORDINATE IDEAS OF
INFLUENCE OF JEWISH THINKING ON U.S. DECISION-MAKING AND
PURPOSE PRESUMABLY WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT TIMERMAN WAS IN
REASONABLY GOOD HEALTH AND RECEIVING GOOD TREATMENT.
NEVERTHELESS, AUTHORITIES APPEARED NERVOUS ABOUT RISK THE
RISK OF RUNNING INTERMEDIATE MILITARY AND TO APPOINTED
LEADING RUSS PROPAGANDA PRODUCE QUALITY TO THE EVENT. WE
BELIEVE IT PRUDENT TO DRAW ANY CONCLUSIONS AS TO THE FINAL
OUTCOME OF THE TIMERMAN CASE FROM THIS EVENT. END COMMENT.

9. EMBASSY ALSO HAS BEEN CONFIDENTIALLY TRANSMITTED A SERIES
OF DOCUMENTS FROM RUSS INTELLIGENCE SOURCES THAT HE ORIGINALLY
WAS TOLD WOULD DEMONSTRATE THAT TIMERMAN HAD CONVERTED TO
SEEING A COMMUNIST AND SOVIET SPY. HOWEVER, THE DOCUMENTS HE
HAVE INSTEAD INCLUDE COMMENTS PURPORTINGLY NOT BY THE POLICE
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CHIEF OF THE PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES, COL. CAMPS, IN A BRIEFING
ON MAY 3, 1977, REPORTEDLY ACCORDING TO CAMPS, TIMERMAN
DEFINED HIMSELF AS A MARXIST SINCE HIS YOUTH WHO HAD BEEN
ACTIVE IN STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS. HE ADMITTED PATTERNING HIS
NEWSPAPER ALONG THE MARXIST LINES OF "LE MONDE". (C) HE
ALSO ADMITTED THAT DAVID GRAIVER HAD PROVIDED ALL THE CAPITAL
FOR THE NEWSPAPER AND THE PRINTING PLANT AND TIMERMAN ORIGINALLY
HAD BEEN ACCORDED A 45 PERCENT INTEREST AS THE FRUITS OF HIS
LABOR. ON THE DEATH OF GRAIVER, TIMERMAN ALLEGEDLY THREATENED
GRAIVER'S WIDOW WITH DEATH UNLESS SHE TURNED OVER TO HIM HER LATE
HUSBAND'S SHARES. HE ALLEGEDLY ADMITTED HAVING RECEIVED A
\$200,000 BRIBE TO WRITE A FAVORABLE STORY ON THE ALUAR DEAL
AND ANOTHER \$175,000 ON ANOTHER OCCASION BY ITT, ACCORDING TO
COL. CAMPS' REPORTED STATEMENT. TIMERMAN ADMITTED ALL OF
THESE THINGS IN A SIGNED CONFESSION. ANOTHER DOCUMENT
INCLUDED IN THE PACKET CITES MEDIA ARTICLES AS REPORTING
THAT TIMERMAN HAD BEEN A MEMBER OF A COMMUNIST YOUTH
FRONT GROUP IN 1942, HAD ADMITTED BEING A "LEFTIST ZIONIST,"
HAD BEEN FRIEND OF FORMER PERONIST-ECONOMY MINISTER JOSE
BER GELBERG WHOSE POLICIES HE UNCONDITIONALLY SUPPORTED IN
HIS NEWSPAPER, HAD PURSUED A CONFUSED EDITORIAL THE WHICH AT
ONE TIME SUPPORTED TERRORIST SUBVERSION AND SUBSEQUENTLY
ATTACKED IT AND WHO WAS A SELF-CONFESSED SUPPORTER OF EURO-
COMMUNISM AS OPPOSED TO THE SOVIET LINE. THERE IS ALSO A
WEDGEPODGE OF OTHER CHARGES SUCH AS THAT HE HIRED WELL-KNOWN
LEFTISTS AND ALLEGED TERRORIST SUPPORTERS ON HIS NEWSPAPER
STAFF.
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